WTTC Tourism Leaders Show Support for Bangkok's 'Green Lung'

About 100 attendees from the World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit in Bangkok will plant more than 300 mangrove trees in Bang Krachao, Bangkok's 'green lung' across the Chao Phraya River from Klong Toey, to draw attention to environmental issues and the continuous pressure to develop the area.

Gerald LawlessThe greening effort on 28 April is part of the global Tourism Cares non-profit initiative, which unites tourism industry members to give back to local communities and is held in close collaboration with the WTTC.

"I think WTTC tourism leaders will be pleasantly surprised by the wonderful 16km2 of orchards, canals and rural walkways that we have on the doorstep of downtown Bangkok," said Willem Niemeijer, CEO of YAANA Ventures, a sustainable tourism facilitator company which was chosen by Tourism Cares to organise a green event after the summit.

"Bang Krachao is Bangkok's last oasis of calm, home to hundreds of bird and plant species. The pressure to pave it over in the name of 'development' is immense. We should keep it green. Our tree planting is a small step in that direction," said Niemeijer.

There is a three-year scheme with the Royal Forestry Department, Kasetsart University and petroleum company PTT to enhance public green spaces and ensure at least 60% of the area remains green.

Willem NiemeijerHowever, changing Bangkok lifestyles and developers offering to pay around 24 million baht (US$700,000) for an 80 x 80 metre plot of land mean that pressure to sell is immense.

Increasing numbers of the Thai capital's walkers, cyclists and kayakers use Bang Krachao as a convenient escape to nature, a five-minute ferry ride from Bangkok. The eco-friendly solar powered Bangkok Tree House hotel in eastern Bang Krachao is indicative of how sustainable tourism is now popular in the area and could help keep Bang Krachao mostly green.

WTTC members will inspect the area first hand on Friday.

"It will be an important day," said Gerald Lawless, WTTC Chairman. "One where we can personally demonstrate and inspire others by showing we are hands on, caring and engaged and leaving a positive contribution to the city of Bangkok."

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About YAANA Ventures
YAANA Ventures is an owner, partner and operator of entrepreneurial travel and hospitality ventures in Asia. YAANA distinguishes itself by sharing real experiences that are grounded in the cultural richness of Asia. The company is the champion of the triple bottom-line: it empowers its ventures with the values to nurture the people with whom it works. Visit http://yaana-ventures.com/.

About Tourism Cares
Tourism Cares, Inc., a US 501(c)(3) public charity, maximizes travel's potential to be a global force for good by leveraging the care that travelers and the industry feel for the places we love. We unite the travel industry to make a greater impact on shared priorities, and to help each company fulfill its giving goals. Together, with leading travel and tourism companies and associations, we make a greater difference on three shared issues: helping destinations in need, supporting our workforce, and improving our corporate social responsibility. Learn more at www.TourismCares.org and @TourismCares.

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